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Security Council

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Seventh report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 1289 (2000) of 7 February 2000, the Council requested me to report on a regular basis on security conditions on the ground so that troop levels and the tasks to be performed by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) can be kept under review. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and reflects developments since my sixth report on UNAMSIL, issued on 24 August 2000 (S/2000/832). In its resolution 1321 (2000) of 20 September, the Security Council decided to extend the present mandate of UNAMSIL until 31 December 2000. In the same resolution, the Council also decided to review the situation no later than 31 October. The present report contains information on the efforts of the Secretariat to identify Member States willing to contribute the necessary troops and equipment to UNAMSIL.

II. Political developments

2. The situation in Sierra Leone has been at a political and military standstill since the events of May/June 2000. During the reporting period, the efforts of UNAMSIL and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been focused on creating a political and security environment conducive to a resumption of the peace process. In spite of the designation of a new interim leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Issa Sesay, which was facilitated by the President of Mali, Alpha Oumar Konaré, and the President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, there has been no progress towards the establishment of a political dialogue and a possible ceasefire. There are reports indicating that some RUF field commanders, in particular those from the north, are reluctant to recognize Mr. Sesay's authority.

3. Moreover, some RUF commanders have continued to maintain a hostile posture, insisting that they will neither lay down their weapons nor give up the diamond-mining areas under their control. UNAMSIL has also received reports that RUF may be preparing for military operations in Guinea. The Government of Sierra Leone has stated its preference for a permanent cessation of hostilities, but on condition that RUF withdraw from most of the areas it currently controls, as well as the diamond-producing areas. At the same time, the Government of Sierra Leone is also pursuing an ambitious military strategy to dislodge RUF. For its part, ECOWAS intends to dispatch to Sierra Leone, in the near future, its committee established in May to facilitate a cessation of hostilities.

4. The designation of Mr. Sesay as interim leader has enabled UNAMSIL to establish limited informal contacts with RUF. These have so far focused on the return of the weapons and equipment seized from UNAMSIL and on humanitarian access to the areas under RUF control. With regard to the seized weapons, to date, RUF has returned only nine armoured personnel carriers which have been completely stripped of their equipment. The Mission was also able to recover the disabled MI8 helicopter which had been left near Makeni during the May crisis. Contacts are continuing, and RUF has promised to return additional items.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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Regional aspects

5. Since early September, at least 15 attacks against Guinean border villages have been carried out by armed insurgents, reportedly operating from the territories of Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Government of Guinea reports that 350 people have been killed during the incursions, when several military and administrative establishments were targeted. Responsibility for the attacks has not been established, although UNAMSIL has received reports of RUF involvement. The Government of Guinea has accused the Governments of Liberia and Burkina Faso of complicity in the attacks. Both Governments have denied involvement. As part of efforts to counter the attacks, the Government of Guinea has armed civilians and mobilized civil defence committees in the border areas.

6. Fighting has been reported between the Liberian army and armed elements since July when they launched an incursion into Lofa County in northern Liberia. Guinea has refuted allegations by Liberia that it is allowing the dissidents to operate from Guinean territory. The situation appears to have stabilized somewhat recently, with the Government of Liberia reporting on 20 October that it had regained control over Voinjama and deployed troops along the border to deter further attacks on the town.

7. These developments have exacerbated tensions between Guinea and Liberia. President Konaré and President Obasanjo have been actively seeking to defuse the situation, within the framework of ECOWAS. At a meeting convened by President Konaré at Bamako on 16 September, the Ministers of Defence and Security of the Mano River Union countries, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, issued a communiqué calling, inter alia, for the deployment of ECOWAS military observers along the common borders of the three countries, a proposal endorsed at an extraordinary meeting of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council held early in October at Abuja. ECOWAS has indicated that a technical team is expected to travel to the area soon to assess the situation and the logistical requirements for deploying an observer team. In view of the limited capacity of ECOWAS, however, international assistance would be needed to deploy and maintain an observer group on the ground. President Konaré and President Obasanjo met with the President of Guinea, Lansana Conté, at Abuja on 9 October for discussions on the continuing border crisis.

8. The violence in the border areas has caused the internal displacement of an estimated 40,000 Guineans. United Nations agencies are working to provide them with assistance. Conditions in the camps housing around 450,000 Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees have deteriorated following the forced withdrawal of UNHCR staff in mid-September. The insecurity has also sparked suspicions among the local population that rebel elements might be among the refugees, causing a deterioration in the traditionally hospitable relations between Guineans and the refugee population in some areas. The problems have resulted in some 12,000 Sierra Leoneans and thousands of Liberians returning home, many into insecure areas.

9. The possibility of widening regional instability causing even greater cross-border population movements in the near future into neighbouring countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, cannot be discounted. The troubling events in Côte d'Ivoire, following the presidential elections, give further cause for concern.

Coordination between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States

10. On 11 September, I chaired the first meeting of the United Nations, Government of Sierra Leone and ECOWAS Coordination Mechanism, which was held in New York. The meeting was attended by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone and senior officials of the United Nations, including my Special Representative. Discussions focused on modalities for restarting the peace process and examined issues such as the new RUF leadership; return of weapons seized by RUF; a ceasefire; and regional investigations into the resumption of hostilities and illegal trafficking in diamonds.

Security Council mission to Sierra Leone and the region

11. The 11-member Security Council mission to Sierra Leone, which also included visits to Abuja, Bamako, Conakry and Monrovia, from 9 to 14 October, clearly demonstrated to Sierra Leoneans, and to the subregion, the firm commitment of the international

community to help restore peace in Sierra Leone. Its report was issued on 16 October (S/2000/922).

12. The Security Council mission recommended that a comprehensive strategy be developed, for which it made several suggestions and recommendations, including the establishment of a United Nations-based mechanism for overall coordination. With respect to renewed dialogue with RUF, the mission recommended that my Special Representative give high and immediate priority to the coordination of active contacts with regional leaders.

III. Military developments

13. Despite the relative calm that has prevailed since the latter part of August, the overall security situation in Sierra Leone remains precarious and unpredictable. While the overall situation in the country in recent weeks has been characterized as relatively quiet, this period was marked by the increase in the number of cross-border attacks along the border area of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Within Sierra Leone, there has been no change in the areas controlled by either RUF or the pro-Government forces.

14. The Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and Civil Defence Forces made several efforts to push back RUF in some areas, but made little headway. Their operations against RUF were concentrated mainly on the Mange-Kambia axis and along the banks of the Little Scarcies River. The Civil Defence Forces also engaged RUF in areas north-east of Kono districts and the general area of Tongo Fields. Since the last report, RUF has largely maintained a defensive posture, but has also continued to mobilize its forces in its strongholds and to dig craters on major roads. Recent reports indicate that RUF has reinforced its presence along the road from Kenema to Daru.

15. During the period under review, there were several attacks on UNAMSIL by RUF and by an ex-SLA/Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), known as the West Side group. These attacks were repelled without casualties on the UNAMSIL side; five combatants of the West Side group were killed.

16. Following the announcement in August by Johnny Paul Koroma, Chairman of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, renouncing his leadership of any armed group, Foday Kallay claimed that he was the new leader of the AFRC/ex-SLA. Under Kallay's leadership, the West Side group continued to conduct criminal acts in the Okra Hills-Masiaka area, including manning illegal checkpoints and harassing civilians.

17. On 25 August, 11 British military personnel — members of a team involved in the training of the Sierra Leone Army — and one Sierra Leone Army officer were taken hostage by the West Side group in the Okra Hills area. After negotiations produced no results, the United Kingdom forces conducted a successful rescue operation on 10 September. As a result of the operation, the West Side group was dislodged from its Okra Hills base and has lost most of its capability; Kallay and other key combatants were captured, while at least 26 others were killed. The operation also resulted in the surrender of a significant number of West Side group combatants, including some of their senior commanders. To date, over 370 fighters from the West Side group have surrendered as a result of both the UNAMSIL Operation Thunderbolt, which was launched on 22 July, and the British rescue operation.

Training of the Sierra Leone Army

18. The Sierra Leone Army continued to build up its strength through the United Kingdom-led training programme; two groups of its soldiers, totalling approximately 2,000, have now completed the programme. The newly trained Sierra Leone Army, however, suffers from lack of leadership and logistics, among other problems, which continue to hamper its effectiveness.

19. Reports of acts of indiscipline and harassment of civilians by elements of both the Sierra Leone Army and the Civil Defence Forces have been a cause of serious concern. In particular, the Civil Defence Forces in the south have increasingly resorted to assertive and uncoordinated actions which have raised fears of a possible rift between them and the Government forces.

Status of deployment of the Mission

20. As at 30 October, the military strength of UNAMSIL stood at 12,510. UNAMSIL troops are deployed at Freetown, Hastings, Newton, Waterloo, Lungi, Pepel and Tasso Islands, Kawbana, Lungi Loi, Masiaka, Rogberi Junction, Rokel Bridge, Port Loko, Magbuntoso, Mile 91, Bo, Moyamba, Kenema, Daru and Joru. The troops continued to consolidate their defensive positions through active patrols and cordon

and search operations. These operations, which were carried out mainly in Freetown, yielded a considerable amount of illegal weapons and ammunition. The rotation of the Ghanaian, Indian and Nigerian contingents was carried out during the reporting period.

21. UNAMSIL peacekeepers have also provided humanitarian assistance to the local population in their areas of deployment. The Force Engineering Unit, in a joint project with the Sierra Leone Roads Authority, is rehabilitating the Mabang River bridge, which is crucial for road transport between Freetown and the Southern Province. Individual contingents have also provided, from their own resources, direct assistance in the form of food, agricultural projects, limited medical care and other social activities. In this regard, I call upon donors to contribute to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sierra Leone to enable UNAMSIL to launch quick impact projects where it is deployed, in coordination with the humanitarian community.

22. Teams of United Nations military observers have continued to maintain and report on their contacts with the parties. In this regard, observers in Moyamba and Kenema have also played a role in dealing with the tension between the Civil Defence Forces and the Sierra Leone police in these areas. Military observer teams also continue to assist in the disarmament and demobilization process.

IV. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

23. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities that are currently under way are focused on completing the demobilization and discharging the previous case load of ex-combatants currently in the camps; providing short-term reintegration assistance to the discharged ex-combatants; encouraging the combatants to come forward for voluntary disarmament; and pursuing a vigorous sensitization campaign for both combatants and communities. Until there is a cessation of hostilities, the overall strategy is to maintain the limited ongoing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities in order to provide facilities for those combatants who voluntarily decide to disarm and return to normal civilian life. A total of 706 ex-combatants (138 RUF, 554 AFRC, and 14 Civil Defence Forces) joined the programme during the period from 8 May to 13 October 2000.

24. An independent team of experts, sponsored by the World Bank and the United Kingdom Department for International Development, visited Sierra Leone during the first two weeks of September to conduct a comprehensive review of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and will shortly be presenting its final report. The team noted that non-compliance by RUF with the Lomé Peace Agreement had been a fundamental obstacle to the implementation of the programme. The team made several recommendations, such as the harmonization of disarmament/demobilization components and the reintegration component, which could be implemented to improve the future operations of the programme.

25. The National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration also addressed issues relating to the need to review the payment of the transitional safety allowance, the suspension of which has created confusion and occasional disturbances and unrest in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camps. The Commission is devising a programme that will provide an incentive to disarm without appearing to be paying for weapons. The issue of provision of support to dependents of ex-combatants presently in the camps and the increasing numbers of combatants coming forward to join the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme without weapons is also being reviewed by the Commission.

V. Civilian police

26. The unpredictable security situation remains a major obstacle to the efforts to assist in the restoration of effective policing and to support the extension of the Government's presence and authority throughout the country. Civilian police advisers have been focusing on the promotion of community policing both in Freetown and in the south, where the effectiveness of the Sierra Leone Police Force is gradually being restored. During this period, civilian police advisers were also redeployed to Port Loko after a careful assessment of the security situation there during the period under review. The retraining programme for the police, which is assisted by the Commonwealth, is proceeding at a very slow pace owing to the lack of facilities and resources.

VI. Civil affairs

27. Since my last report, UNAMSIL has endeavoured to increase its contacts with local leaders as well as the community in general. UNAMSIL is working closely with the Sierra Leonean authorities to reinstate a district office at Koinadugu, and to temporarily relocate to Port Loko the offices of the capital of the Northern Province, Makeni. In the Eastern Province, the number of chiefdoms under Government control has risen from 9 to 14, and efforts to re-establish civil administration in Daru are at an advanced stage.

28. During the reporting period, UNAMSIL embarked on a number of surveys in villages and towns in and around Freetown and in the Kenema area in an effort to identify areas of "immediate assistance" which can be funded under the Trust Fund for Sierra Leone. UNAMSIL has also been assessing projects proposed by various international and national agencies under the Trust Fund. In this regard, I appeal to donors to contribute generously to the Trust Fund to enable UNAMSIL, in coordination with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, to execute a variety of projects in support of the peace process.

VII. Public information

29. During the reporting period, the activities of the public information section increased. Radio UNAMSIL now broadcasts on a regular basis, including news in English and Krio, press briefings (with summaries in Krio), as well as civic education and public service programmes. The station recently launched a family tracing programme and continues to provide airtime to United Nations agencies. Planning is under way to extend Radio UNAMSIL coverage from Freetown and the north-west to other regions of the country, and future broadcasts will be carried out using the local languages (Mende, Temne and Limba).

30. The section has also produced printed products to enhance communication with the local population and within the Mission. These include a number of leaflets on human rights and the UNAMSIL mandate, press releases, news bulletins and a newsletter. UNAMSIL is widening its contacts with local media to help promote coverage of Mission activities. In addition, local and international media participate in regular UNAMSIL press briefings. There remains, nonetheless, much to be done before the UNAMSIL public information campaign achieves the level of capability and effectiveness that is required.

VIII. Human rights

31. The prevailing human rights situation remained precarious during the reporting period. In particular, thousands of displaced persons and refugees from Guinea have fled to sections of the Lungi peninsula following the recent harassment of Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea. In the Port Loko and Kambia districts, abductions and forced recruitment of civilians, as well as the looting and raiding of villages by RUF, have continued.

32. Abuses committed by elements of the West Side group in the Okra Hills area have decreased dramatically since the British rescue operation of 10 September. However, there have been recent reports of abuses of civilians by the Civil Defence Force faction known as the Gbetis, who have occupied territory that used to be under the control of the West Side group. While the national Civil Defence Force leadership has warned rank and file members against engaging in conduct that harms or intimidates civilians, the behaviour of Force personnel remains a major concern throughout the southern and eastern regions. Civilian allegations of Civil Defence Force harassment, including summary executions, arbitrary detentions and extortion of money and property at checkpoints have been endemic in the past months. In addition, the relationship between the Civil Defence and civilian police forces has deteriorated markedly.

33. Following several approaches to the Government of Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL was granted access and assessment missions were undertaken to prisons in Freetown, Bo and Kenema. While overcrowded and in obvious disrepair, the general conditions of detention were assessed to be fair. Human rights officers did not receive any allegation of human rights violations against detainees, although inmates complained of overcrowding and other conditions. Some children detainees, however, showed some signs of serious skin diseases. Their cases have been referred to the World Health Organization and UNICEF, which have since followed up with the prison medical authorities. During the month of August, at least 200 suspected RUF members were released by the Government from Freetown and Kenema prisons, but at least 200 other

members of fighting forces, including 13 children, continue to be detained.

The Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

34. The establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission could contribute to ending impunity and developing respect for the rule of law, and bring closure to victims of human rights abuses. The report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of a Special Court for Sierra Leone (S/2000/915) submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1315 (2000), is now before the Council for its consideration and further action. In November, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in conjunction with UNAMSIL, will be organizing a workshop in Freetown with the participation of Government and civil society, at which the truth and reconciliation process and its relationship with the special court will be discussed. In addition, UNAMSIL is working closely with the Office of the High Commissioner in elaborating a public information campaign related to the truth and reconciliation process, the special court and its targeted jurisdiction, which will, inter alia, have to address any perception that the special court might act as a disincentive for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

Child protection

35. The Government of Sierra Leone has approved the establishment of a commission for war-affected children. This was a major first step towards the creation of a national body that will promote the interest, development and welfare of all war-affected children as provided in the Lomé Agreement.

36. Following the consultative workshop on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme held in July, the implementation of the strategy for the reintegration of child ex-combatants has been formally approved. The reintegration assistance extends from the demobilization process to family reunification. It includes interim care and basic services for up to three months, psychosocial counselling, personal supplies, family tracing and reunification support. The Executive Secretariat of the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration has signed a memorandum of understanding with UNICEF to cover technical implementation and monitoring of the child component of the programme.

37. Training of peacekeepers on child rights and child protection was undertaken for the replacement units of the Ghana Battalion in Kenema, Daru, and Freetown. At the request of the Sierra Leone defence headquarters, a similar child rights and child protection training programme was introduced in the current training of the new Sierra Leone Army at the Benguema training centre. UNICEF, together with trainers from the Ministry of Social Welfare and CARITAS, and non-governmental organizations in the Child Protection Network, conducted the training for 30 officers and 1,000 soldiers.

IX. Enhancing the effectiveness of the Mission

38. Efforts to improve the effectiveness of UNAMSIL through implementation of the recommendations of the assessment mission, which visited the area in May 2000, are continuing. My Special Representative has set up a committee, headed by the Deputy Special Representative, to oversee the implementation of the recommendations. Among other things, UNAMSIL has instituted a comprehensive five-day training package, which includes orientation sessions on the Mission's mandate and rules of engagement, international humanitarian law and human rights and other key issues relating to the Mission. Pocket-sized cards summarizing the code of conduct for peacekeepers and the UNAMSIL rules of engagement, in several languages, have been distributed to members of contingents and display cards summarizing the mandate have been provided to all battalions. In addition, political, civil affairs and human rights officers have been visiting military contingents to provide briefings on developments in their respective areas.

39. Coordination between civilian and military personnel within UNAMSIL has also improved. The Deputy Special Representative attends daily military briefings and ensures necessary exchange of information. A communications centre has been established and is operating efficiently, as is the communications system between the force and sector headquarters. My Special Representative has also

established a working group to advise him on policy and planning, which includes participation of substantive, military and administration personnel. Information sharing between UNAMSIL and other United Nations agencies is carried out through fortnightly coordination meetings. Close coordination and conveying of security information is accomplished through the humanitarian information centre, with the participation of both military and civilian UNAMSIL personnel. The civilian-military information centre acts as an advisory body to the humanitarian information centre.

X. Humanitarian aspects

40. During this reporting period, the humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone has continued to deteriorate. In particular, lack of access severely restricted humanitarian operations inside the country. Meanwhile, new cross-border population movements resulting from clashes between armed elements near the borders of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea are placing an additional burden on already overcrowded camps of internally displaced persons and host communities.

41. Since the resumption of hostilities in May, approximately 300,000 Sierra Leoneans have been newly displaced, bringing the total number of internally displaced persons in the country to about 500,000. Despite the expansion and creation of new camps to accommodate this increase, all existing camps in the Western Area, Bo, Kenema and Port Loko are seriously overcrowded, with some accommodating more than three times their capacity. Attempts to alleviate overcrowding have been hampered by the lack of security. Further, the humanitarian community continues to face difficulties in obtaining approval from the Government for new land allocation in safe areas to alleviate overcrowding and expand services to internally displaced persons, such as water and sanitation facilities.

42. As a result, maintaining the minimum standards of assistance in the existing camps has become increasingly difficult. Already high levels of mortality and infectious disease are worsening. In many cases, agencies have been compelled to target both internally displaced persons and host families, as there is no discernible difference in their vulnerability status.

43. In addition, the provision of assistance to internally displaced persons and vulnerable groups in the RUF-surrounded Government enclaves of Daru, Kabala and Bumbuna has been possible only on a limited basis with air support provided by UNAMSIL. About 1 million Sierra Leoneans remain beyond the reach of aid agencies in rebel-controlled areas. Reports from those areas indicate that severe food shortages and unchecked infectious diseases are taking their toll on the civilian population. Routine childhood immunization has almost completely collapsed in some areas of the country because of lack of access, while even the best-performing districts are only managing to vaccinate less than 30 per cent of all eligible children.

44. To prepare for greater cross-border population movements, as a result of the recent border insecurity, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs hosted a meeting of the resident/humanitarian coordinators of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as key United Nations agency representatives at the subregional, country and headquarters level in Accra on 5 and 6 October. As a result, the Office and the agencies are in the process of finalizing an inter-agency humanitarian contingency plan, including preparedness measures, which will serve as a basis for a regional consolidated inter-agency appeal. Both this regional appeal and the Sierra Leone consolidated inter-agency appeal will be launched on 29 November 2000 in London.

XI. Consultations with troop contributors

45. In view of the increase in the United Nations military presence in Sierra Leone, which I had proposed in my previous report (S/2000/832), the Secretariat maintained close consultations with potential troop contributors during this period. On 28 September, I chaired a meeting with the countries participating in the Standby Forces High Readiness Brigade to discuss their possible contribution to UNAMSIL. A follow-up meeting, chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, was held on 5 October. A number of other countries have also been approached, and discussions with them are ongoing.

46. To date, the Secretariat has received the following offers, for which I am very grateful: Bangladesh: two

infantry battalions, one maritime unit, one communications unit, one artillery unit, one engineer company, and one level-II medical unit; Ghana: one infantry battalion, which requires assistance to provide it with the necessary equipment. In this regard, I have received offers from Ukraine to provide 200 armoured personnel carriers and 200 utility trucks as well as 400 maintenance personnel; Slovakia would be willing to provide 200 utility trucks.

47. On 10 October, the Government of the United Kingdom announced a package of further military assistance to the Government of Sierra Leone and UNAMSIL, which includes, inter alia, increased training of the Sierra Leone Army, a rapid reaction capability, up to brigade strength, which could be deployed in support of United Nations peacekeeping operations, and the contribution of staff officers to UNAMSIL headquarters. During the period under review, the United States Government has also initiated a training programme that would train up to seven battalions of West African peacekeepers.

48. On 20 September, the Government of India informed me that it has decided to withdraw from UNAMSIL. It has proposed that the first battalion be withdrawn in November, followed by the second battalion in January. In addition, the Government of India intends to withdraw all other Indian personnel and assets, including the attack and transport helicopters, the artillery unit and the level-III medical unit in December. The Government of Jordan informed me on 19 October that it also had decided to withdraw from UNAMSIL; Jordan hopes to complete its withdrawal, in phases, by the end of the year.

XII. Observations

49. In view of the impact on UNAMSIL's capabilities of the decisions by the Governments of India and Jordan, I have impressed on them that it is imperative that the withdrawal of their contingents, the scheduled rotation of other contingents, and the deployment of additional troops be conducted in a manner which leaves no security gaps in Sierra Leone. It would be necessary therefore to overlap the deployment of incoming and outgoing units, which may entail a temporary increase in the short term of the Mission's troop strength over the authorized level of 13,000 military personnel.

50. The movements of the various contingents will also put a heavy strain on the Mission's logistic capabilities and will need to be carefully coordinated to avoid creating a dangerous security gap. In this regard, I call on the contributors involved to show the necessary flexibility with regard to the withdrawal and/or induction of troops. In addition, UNAMSIL may also require some additional military movement and logistics personnel to deal with the high volume of movements during the period of rotation and withdrawal.

51. In the near future, it appears that UNAMSIL will not be able to achieve significant gains in its authorized strength. In fact, current offers of troops and equipment will not be sufficient to compensate for the withdrawal of the large Indian and Jordanian contingents.

52. I share the Security Council mission's view, expressed in its report (S/2000/992), that the problems in Sierra Leone and the region represent an extraordinary challenge to the international community. As the mission stressed, this challenge requires a well-coordinated and comprehensive approach, based on credible military pressure, a dialogue with the rebels leading to their disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, justice and reconciliation, humanitarian assistance and the economic and social rehabilitation of Sierra Leone.

53. A key aspect of this approach is the continued provision of security by UNAMSIL in key areas of the country. In order to achieve this objective without exposing its troops to undue risks, UNAMSIL would require an increase in its authorized strength to the level of 20,500 all ranks, as recommended in my previous report. These additional resources would enable it to enhance its operational structure and to deploy progressively forward in strength under the mandate contained in resolutions 1270 (1999) and 1289 (2000). In this regard, I have approached a number of Governments with a proven military capability, including members of the Security Council, to ascertain their willingness to provide the necessary troops and equipment.

54. As described above, some Governments have come forward with useful offers of troops and equipment, which I deeply appreciate. However, it would appear that these offers will barely be enough to compensate for the loss of the important capabilities provided by the Indian and Jordanian contingents. It

would also seem that, unless additional troop contributors can be quickly identified, it will not be possible to envisage the further strengthening of UNAMSIL until well into the year 2001.

55. As a result, the credibility of the international community's military presence in Sierra Leone, which is a key element of its peace efforts in that country, could be undermined. There is no need to stress that this could have negative repercussions for Sierra Leone and for the efforts of the international community to promote peace and security in the region and beyond. I therefore appeal to Member States, in particular those with large and well-equipped armed forces, to urgently consider participating in UNAMSIL with troops and/or equipment, as well as providing support for the airlift of military units to Sierra Leone. In the meantime, the implementation of the Mission's current mandate, in particular its deployment on the ground, will have to be adjusted in the light of the available resources.

56. I also share the Security Council mission's conclusions that, in the final analysis, no lasting progress can be made in Sierra Leone without comprehensive action being taken to tackle the current instability in the West African region, particularly the Mano River Union countries. The recent disquieting developments in Côte d'Ivoire are a further vindication of the need for such an approach. I have therefore established an interdepartmental task force to provide recommendations concerning a coordinated and coherent United Nations response aimed at addressing the multifaceted problems confronting the subregion, taking into account initiatives under way or being proposed by the various actors.

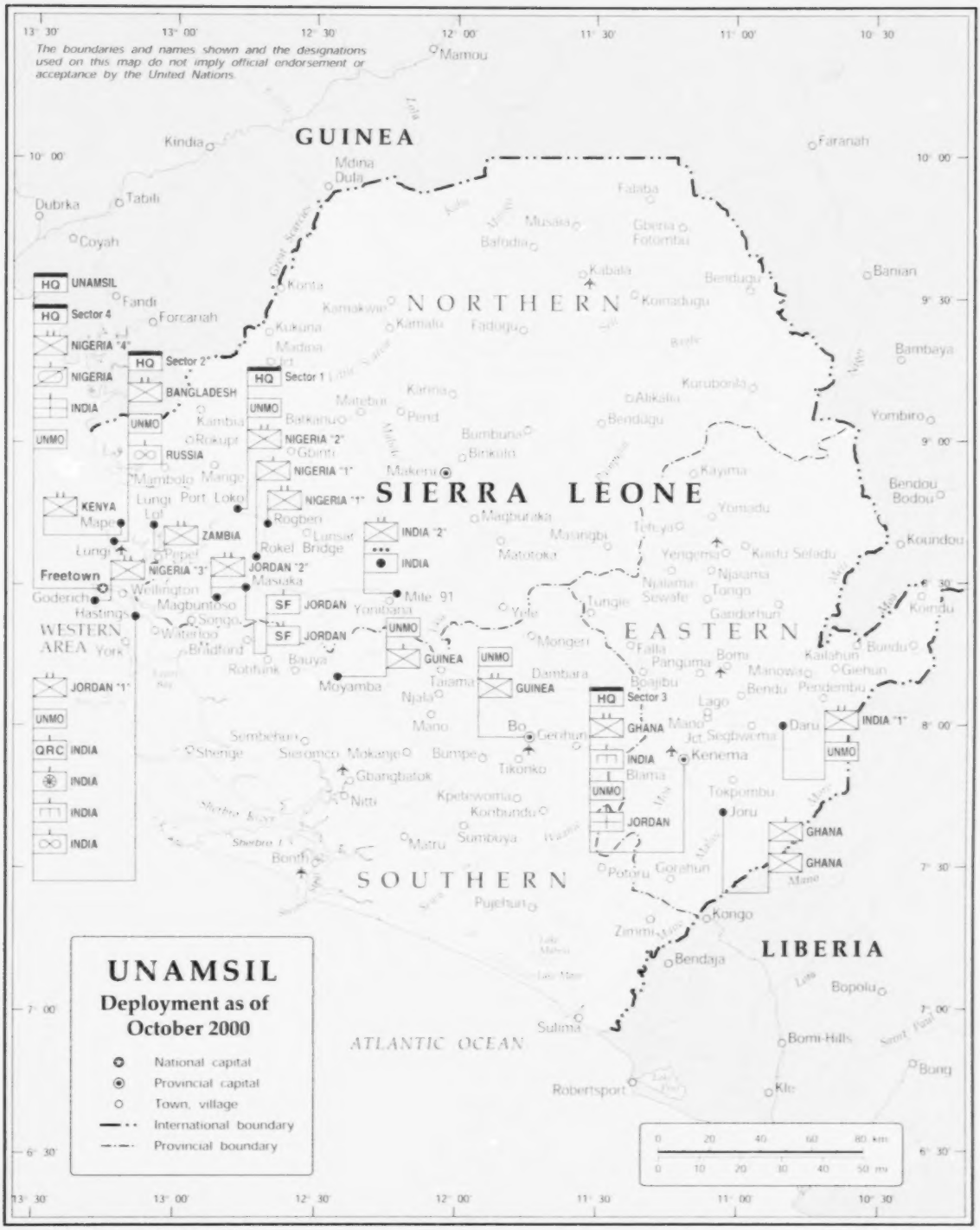
57. Finally, I should like to pay tribute to my Special Representative, Oluyemi Adeniji, and to the men and women serving with UNAMSIL and other United Nations agencies in Sierra Leone for carrying out their task in very difficult and hazardous conditions.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: contributions as at 30 October 2000

	Military observers	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Sector headquarter staff*	*Total*
Bangladesh	12	4	776		792
Bolivia	4				4
Canada	5				5
China	6				6
Croatia	10				10
Czech Republic	5				5
Denmark	2				2
Egypt	10				10
France	1				1
Gambia	26				26
Ghana	4	5	776		785
Guinea	12	2	775		789
India	5	31	3 065	50	3 151
Indonesia	10				10
Jordan	5	8	1 755	49	1 817
Kenya	11	13	815	50	889
Kyrgyzstan	2				2
Malaysia	10				10
Mali	8				8
Nepal	6				6
New Zealand	2				2
Nigeria	4	14	3 144	43	3 205
Norway	4				4
Pakistan	10				10
Russian Federation	15	3	107		125
Slovakia	2				2
Sweden	3				3
Thailand	5				5
United Kingdom	15				15
United Republic of Tanzania	12				12
Uruguay	11				11
Zambia	11	3	774		788
Total	**248**	**83**	**11 987**	**192**	**12 510**

Civilian Police: Bangladesh: 4; Gambia: 2; Ghana: 3; India: 1; Jordan: 3; Kenya: 3; Malaysia: 3; Namibia: 1; Nepal: 5; Norway: 2; Senegal: 5; Zimbabwe: 2. Total: 34.



Map No. 4132 Rev. 7 UNITED NATIONS
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